

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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R 191530Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4549

INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 1115

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, AR

SUBJECT: LABOR'S CHANGING POSITION VIS-A-VIS THE PRESIDENT

REF: BUENOS AIRES 0834

SUMMARY: ORGANIZED LABOR'S RELATIONS WITH PRESIDENT PERON HAVE UNDERGONE A PROFOUND CHANGE, FROM ONE OF ABSOLUTE PERSONAL SUPPORT TO ONE OF BASIC SUPPORT FOR THE INSTITUTION OF THE PRESIDENCY. CHANGE MARKS DIMINUTION OF POWER OF LABOR STRONGMAN LORENZO MIGUEL, HERETOFORE MRS. PERON'S MOST POWERFUL SUPPORT. END SUMMARY.

1. IN FEB 18 JOINT COMMUNIQUE CGT AND 62 ORGANIZATIONS ANNOUNCED THAT ORGANIZED LABOR WOULD NOT FIND ACCEPTABLE ANY SOLUTION TO ON-GOING CRISIS WHICH "AFFECTED THE PRESIDENTIAL INVESTIRUE EXERCISED BY MRS. PERON." COMMUNIQUE ACCUSED MRS. PERON'S PRINCIPAL ADVISORS OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR CRISIS AND CALLED ON THEM
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TO RESIGN. LABOR'S PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR

RESOLVING CRISIS ARE TO BE PRESENTED TO
PRESIDENT FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL CONSULTATIONS WITH
OTHER LABOR AND PERONIST ORGANIZATIONS:

2. COMMENT: FOR FIRST TIME SINCE MRS. PERON ASSUMED
PRESIDENCY, ORGANIZED LABOR FAILED TO CONDITION ANY
CRITICAL COMMUNIQUE WITH A STATEMENT EXPRESSING ITS
ABSOLUTE AND UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR MRS. PERON.
THE DECISION TO WITHHOLD SUCH PERSONAL SUPPORT WAS
MADE ONLY AFTER LENGTHY AND ACRIMONIOUS DISCUSSION
WITHIN LABOR MOVEMENT. FOR FIRST TIME ALSO LABOR
STRONGMAN LORENZO MIGUEL WAS UNABLE TO DICTATE FINAL
RESOLUTIONS OF 62 ORGANIZATIONS. WHEN HIS PROPOSAL,
WHICH INSISTED ON MAINTAINING "ABSOLUTE AND UNCONDITIONAL
SUPPORT FOR MRS. PERON," WAS REJECTED IN EARLIER 62
ORGANIZATIONS MEETING, HE ABANDONED BUENOS AIRES
FOR A "REST" NEAR BARILOCHE. AS A RESULT NEITHER HE
NOR CGT SEC GEN CASILDO HERRERAS, WHO IS ATTENDING ILO
MEETING IN GENEVA, PARTICIPATED IN FINAL POSITION PAPER.

3. LABOR'S CHANGED POSITION VIS-A-VIS THE PRESIDENT
IS BASED PRIMARILY ON LABOR LEADERS' FEAR THAT MRS.
PERON'S INABILITY TO LEAD WILL ULTIMATELY DESTROY THE
PERONIST MOVEMENT, AND POSSIBLY WITH IT THE
ORGANIZED LABOR MOVEMENT. ACCORDINGLY, THEY ARE LAYING
GROUNDWORK FOR FUTURE INSTITUTIONAL SURVIVAL FOLLOWING
MILITARY COUP, WHICH THEY ARE NOW BEGINNING TO
ACCEPT AS ALMOST INEVITABLE. (NOTE. CGT EXECUTIVE
BOARD MEMBER TOLD LABATT THAT FOUR DAYS AGO HE HAD
URGENTLY ORDERED TRANSFER FROM UNION HEADQUARTERS
TO PRIVATE HOUSE ALL DOCUMENTS, ETC., CONCERNING
INTERNATIONAL TRADE SECRETARIAT ACTIVITIES SO THAT SUCH
ACTIVITIES COULD CONTINUE FOLLOWING ANTICIPATED COUP.)

4. IN LINE WITH THAT STRATEGY THE CGT IS ATTEMPTING TO
WITHDRAW FROM POLITICAL BATTLES AND CONCENTRATE TO
GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE ON PURE ECONOMIC TRADE UNION
MATTERS. WHILE THE 62 ORGANIZATIONS FUNCTIONS AS
LABOR'S POLITICAL ARM, IT IS NOW LEANING MORE TOWARD
DEFENSE OF PERONIST MOVEMENT THAN TOWARDS PROVIDING
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THE LAST DITCH BULWARK FOR MRS. PERON, AS IT HAS
HERETOFORE. UNLESS LORENZO MIGUEL, WHO IS NOW AT
BEST IN LIMBO, CAN REGAIN HIS INFLUENCE, ORGANIZED
LABOR WILL REMAIN MORE INTERESTED IN MENDING ITS OWN
BROKEN FENCES THAN IN PROPPING UP THE PRESIDENT.
IT DOES NOT WANT, AND OPPOSES, A MILITARY SOLUTION,
BUT IT IS NOW BEGINNING TO TAKE FULL ACCOUNT OF
GENERAL PERON'S ADMONITION THAT "FIRST COMES THE

COUNTRY, THEN THE MOVEMENT, AND LASTLY THE INDIVIDUALS.
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